MARVEL
49
DARK REIGN
THE NEW AVENGERS
BENDIS
TAN
BANNING
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AND THERE CAME A DAY, A DAY UNLIKE ANY OTHER, WHEN EARTH'S MIGHTIEST HEROES FOUND THEMSELVES UNITED AGAINST A COMMON THREAT! ON THAT DAY, THE AVENGERS WERE BORN, TO FIGHT THE FOES NO SINGLE SUPER HERO COULD WITHSTAND!

THE NEW AVENGERS

PREVIOUSLY IN NEW AVENGERS

THE SHAPE-SHIFTING ALIEN RACE KNOWN AS THE SKRULLS HAS FAILED AT THEIR ATTEMPTED INVASION OF EARTH. BUT THE DAMAGE HAS BEEN DONE.

TONY STARK TOOK THE BLAME FOR THE INVASION AND HAS BEEN STRIPPED OF HIS ROLES AS BOTH LEADER OF THE AVENGERS AND DIRECTOR OF A NOW DEFUNCT S.H.I.E.L.D., WHILE THUNDERBOLTS LEADER (AND ONE-TIME SUPER-VILLAIN GREEN GOBLIN) NORMAN OSBORN HAS RISEN TO POWER AND BEEN APPOINTED TO REPLACE STARK.

STILL, NONE OF THEM, NOT EVEN THE AVENGERS, CAN EVEN KNOW THE FULL EXTENT OF THE INVASION OR WHICH OF THEM WAS -- OR COULD STILL BE -- A SKRULL AGENT.

DURING THE INVASION, THE GROWING PARANOIA CREATED A RIFT IN THE MARRIAGE OF AVENGER LUKE CAGE AND JESSICA JONES. WORRIED FOR THE SAFETY OF THEIR CHILD, JESSICA SOUGHT SHELTER AT AVENGERS TOWER, UNDER THE WATCHFUL EYE OF STARK'S BUTLER, JARVIS, TO WAIT OUT THE WORST OF IT.

BUT WHEN THE INVASION'S FINAL BATTLE HIT ITS ZENITH, JESSICA JONES MADE THE SELFLESS DECISION TO LEAVE HER CHILD WITH JARVIS, AND FIGHT ALONGSIDE HER HUSBAND. LITTLE DID SHE KNOW, JARVIS WAS ONE OF THE SKRULL AGENTS EMBEDDED WITHIN THE AVENGERS.

BY THE TIME JESSICA FIGURED IT OUT, JARVIS, AND THE BABY, WERE GONE.

THE NEW AVENGERS HAVE GATHERED UNDER CAPTAIN AMERICA'S ROOF, BUT TRY AS THEY MIGHT THEY CANNOT FIND THE MISSING BABY. SO LUKE CAGE TURNS TO THE ONE MAN WITH THE POWER AND INFLUENCE TO HELP HIM... NORMAN OSBORN.

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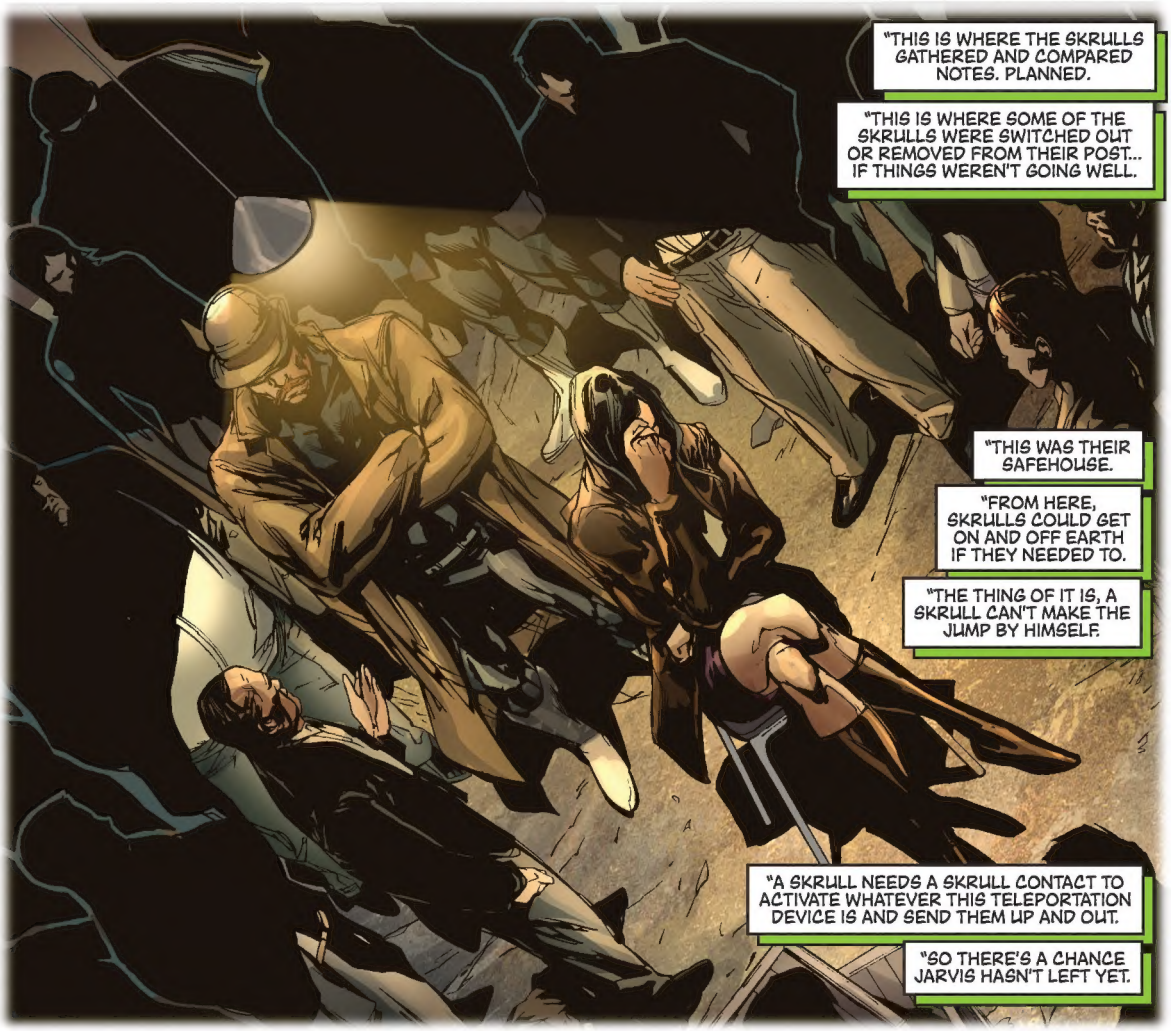
THE RAFT, RYKER'S MAXIMUM-MAXIMUM SECURITY INSTALLATION.
GENTLEMEN...
TAKE ME TO MY PRISONERS OF WAR.

WHAT ARE WE DOING HERE?
DON'T TALK. DON'T SAY ANYTHING. NO MATTER WHAT THEY SAY OR DO. THE EMPIRE IS IN OUR HANDS.
WHAT IS YOUR NAME, SKRULL SOLDIER?
MY NAME IS NORMAN OSBORN. I AM *THE* MAN IN CHARGE NOW.
WE'RE LOOKING FOR A SKRULL. THE ONE THAT POSED AS THE AVENGERS' MANSERVANT JARVIS.
DO YOU KNOW WHO I'M TALKING ABOUT?
MAC...

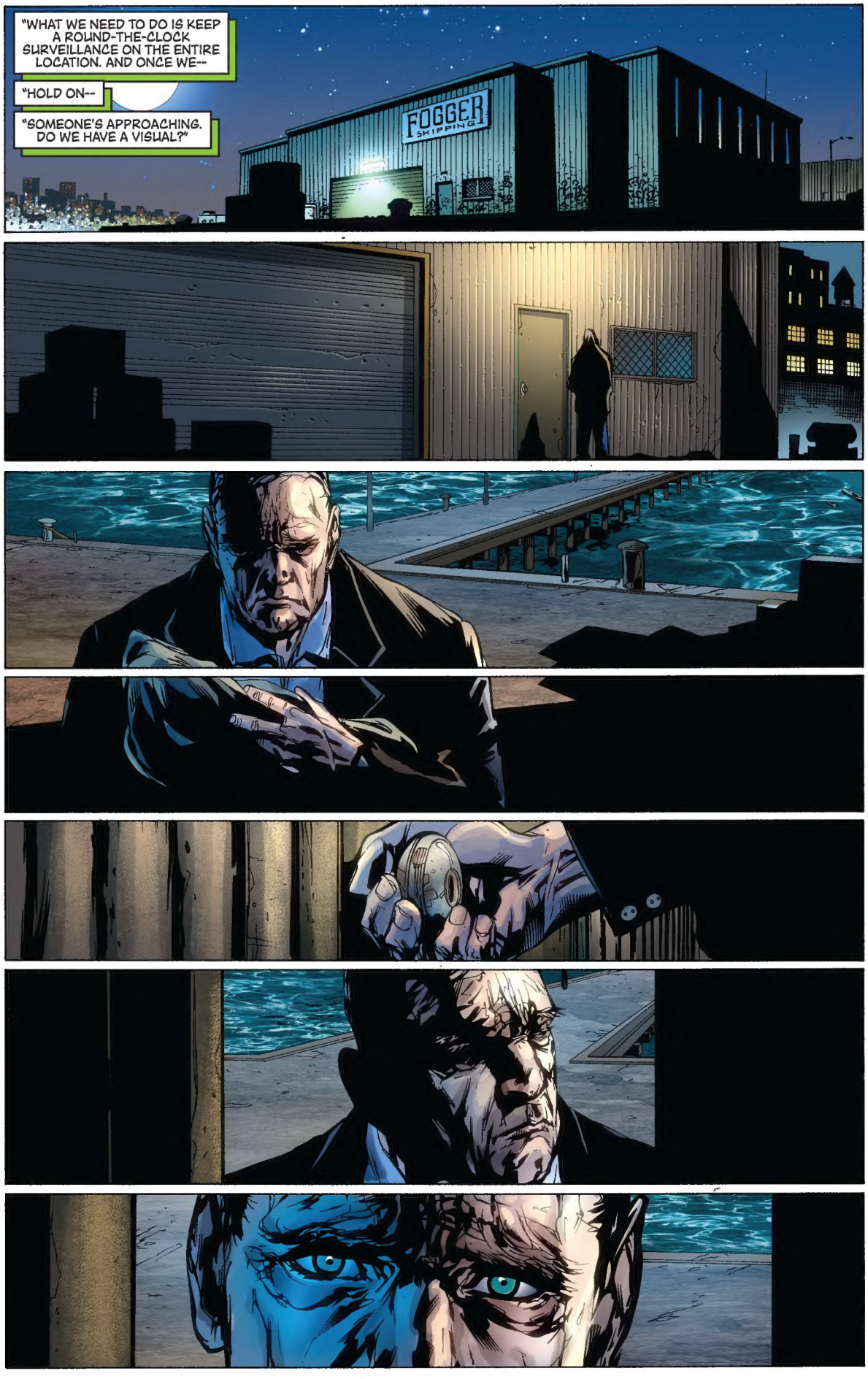
GRAAHHH!
CHROPP
AAAIIEE!
CRNCH
AAAIIIEEGGGKKK!
CRNNNCH
JARVIS.

I-I-I DON'T KNOW.
WE DIDN'T ALL KNOW EACH OTHER.
MAC, STILL HUNGRY?
ALWAYS.
WHERE, OH WHERE, WOULD JARVIS SKRULL BE?
I DIDN'T KNOW HIM.
THIS IS LUKE CAGE.
JARVIS DISAPPEARED DURING YOUR FINAL BATTLE WITH US.
HE HAS TAKEN CAGE'S YOUNG CHILD HOSTAGE AND, CLEARLY, WE WANT THE CHILD BACK.
BUT LET ME MAKE IT VERY CLEAR...
WE HAVE 74 MORE SKRULLS IN CUSTODY.
TELL US SOMETHING OF VALUE OR WE'RE GOING TO MOVE ON TO THE NEXT ONE.
THERE-- THERE IS A MEETING PLACE.
WHERE?!
IN THE CITY?

FOGGER
SHIPPING
"FIVE OTHER SKRULLS CONFIRMED THE INTEL SO NOW I BELIEVE IT.
"SEE THE WAREHOUSE? THERE. THIS WAS THE SKRULL WAR ROOM. THIS IS WHERE THE SKRULLS WERE MEETING BEHIND OUR BACKS.
"IT USED TO BE THE OWL'S DIGS, IF YOU CARE.
"PERSONALLY I DON'T.


"THIS IS WHERE THE SKRULLS GATHERED AND COMPARED NOTES. PLANNED.
"THIS IS WHERE SOME OF THE SKRULLS WERE SWITCHED OUT OR REMOVED FROM THEIR POST... IF THINGS WEREN'T GOING WELL.
"THIS WAS THEIR SAFEHOUSE.
"FROM HERE, SKRULLS COULD GET ON AND OFF EARTH IF THEY NEEDED TO.
"THE THING OF IT IS, A SKRULL CAN'T MAKE THE JUMP BY HIMSELF.
"A SKRULL NEEDS A SKRULL CONTACT TO ACTIVATE WHATEVER THIS TELEPORTATION DEVICE IS AND SEND THEM UP AND OUT.
"SO THERE'S A CHANCE JARVIS HASN'T LEFT YET.

"THERE'S A CHANCE HE KEEPS COMING BACK, HOPING TO MEET UP WITH ANOTHER SKRULL.
"THERE'S A CHANCE.
"BUT THE PROBLEM IS: WHAT POWERS OR ABILITIES DOES JARVIS HAVE?
"THE SKRULL WARRIORS HAD ANY COMBINATION.
"MAYBE HE HAS SOME POWER, MAYBE HE HAS NONE."

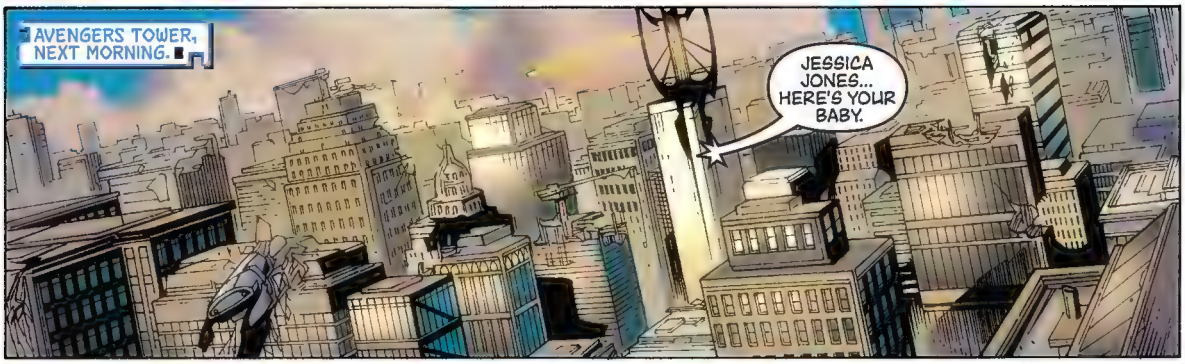

"WHAT WE NEED TO DO IS KEEP A ROUND-THE-CLOCK SURVEILLANCE ON THE ENTIRE LOCATION. AND ONCE WE--
"HOLD ON--
"SOMEONE'S APPROACHING. DO WE HAVE A VISUAL?"
FOGGER
SHIPPING

GIVE ME THE BABY.
SHE'S OKAY.
SHE'S SLEEPING.
I DON'T UNDERSTAND IT, I DON'T...WHY'D YOU EVEN TAKE HER?
I DIDN'T.
YOUR WIFE *GAVE* HER TO ME.
GIVE ME MY BABY.
YOU'LL KILL ME.
I WILL IF YOU DON'T, I PROMISE YOU.
BUT I PROMISE ON MY HONOR, I WON'T IF YOU MAKE THIS RIGHT.
I'LL TAKE MY BABY AND I'LL WALK OUT OF HERE.
YOU CAN BEAM YOUR @#$ UP TO THE ENTERPRISE OR WHATEVER THE @#$% YOU'RE GOING TO DO.
JUST GIVE ME THE BABY.

YOU--YOU DIDN'T COME ALONE.
AIN'T NO ONE ELSE HERE.
YOU TELL OSBORN TO RELEASE THE PRISONERS.
HE--HE RELEASES THEM ALL AND *THEN* YOU GET THE BABY!
WE'LL LEAVE. ALL OF US.
THIS AIN'T A SWAP MEET.
GIVE ME MY BABY.
MY PEOPLE ARE *DESTROYED!*
NOTHIN' TO DO WITH ME. NOTHING TO DO WITH THAT LITTLE BABY.
I DON'T CARE... ABOUT ANY OF IT. JUST WANT MY KID.

SHE'S OKAY?
PACK
I'M NOT A MONSTER, I DID WHAT ANY--

BULLSEYE.


AVENGERS TOWER, NEXT MORNING.
JESSICA JONES... HERE'S YOUR BABY.

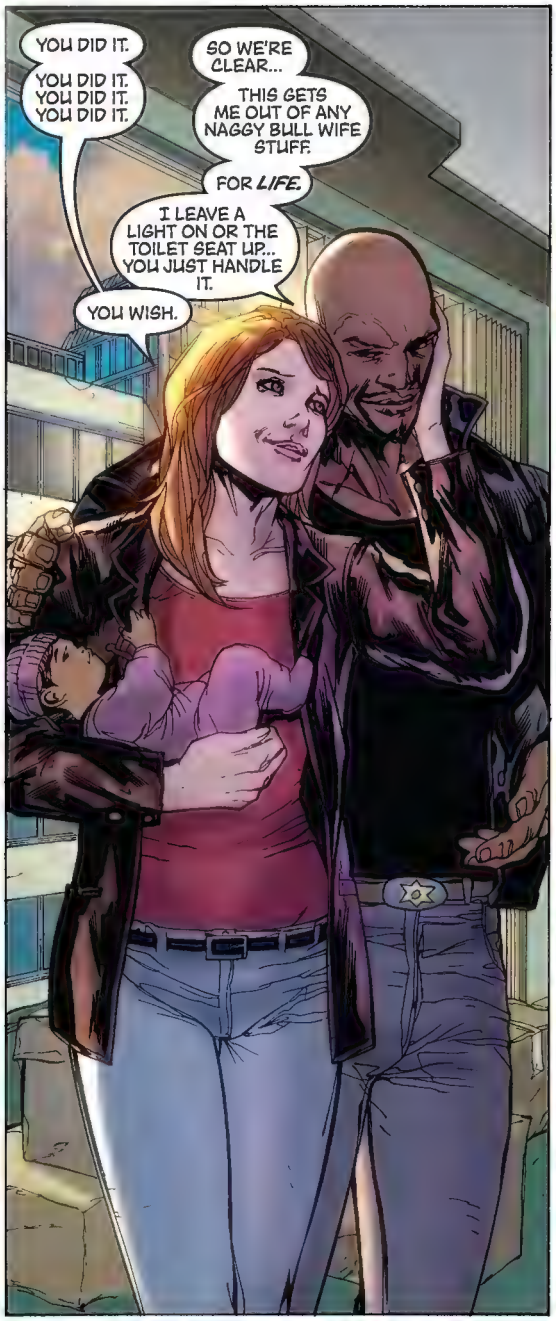
I CAN'T BELIEVE IT.
AND--AND SHE'S OKAY?
SHE'S ALRIGHT?
SHE'S OKAY.

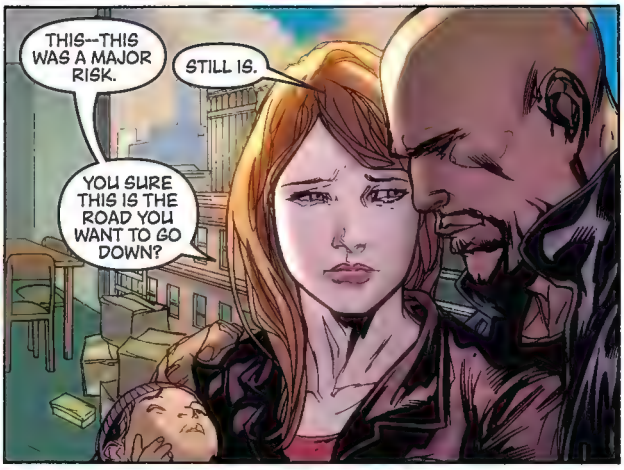
THESE ARE THE NOTES FROM THE S.H.I.E.L.D. DOCTOR WHO LOOKED HER OVER LAST NIGHT.
SHE'S HEALTHY. NO PROBLEMS. PROBABLY NEEDS A BATH.
OKAY.
SHE NEEDS TO BE CHANGED. CAN WE--ARE WE ALLOWED TO--?

YOU'RE NOT BEING HELD PRISONER.
YOUR APARTMENT HERE IS STILL YOUR APARTMENT HERE.

UM, I'M, LISTEN, OSBORN, I'M NOT A SUPER HERO. I DON'T WANT TO BE ONE.
OKAY? I DON'T.
I JUST WANT TO RAISE MY KID.

MY DEAL WAS WITH YOUR HUSBAND.
OKAY.
OKAY?
OKAY.


YOU DID IT.
YOU DID IT. YOU DID IT. YOU DID IT.
SO WE'RE CLEAR...
THIS GETS ME OUT OF ANY NAGGY BULL WIFE STUFF.
FOR *LIFE.*
I LEAVE A LIGHT ON OR THE TOILET SEAT UP.. YOU JUST HANDLE IT.
YOU WISH.


THIS--THIS WAS A MAJOR RISK.
STILL IS.
YOU SURE THIS IS THE ROAD YOU WANT TO GO DOWN?

WE HAVE TO-- WE HAVE TO DO WHAT'S RIGHT FOR HER.
IT'S ALL ABOUT HER. EVERYTHING WE DO FROM NOW ON. IT'S *ALL* ABOUT HER. I KNOW WE KNEW THAT IN THEORY, BUT THIS IS IT.
THIS IS HOW IT *HAS* TO BE.

I THOUGHT SHE WAS DEAD.
ME TOO.
I HAVE NEVER BEEN SO RELIEVED ABOUT ANYTHING EVER IN MY WHOLE ENTIRE LIFE.
HOW ON GOD'S EARTH WOULD WE BE ABLE TO GO ON IF WE DIDN'T GET HER BACK?
THAT'S ALL I'VE BEEN THINKING.
YEAH...
MAKE THE CALL.

WHAT ABOUT YOU?

GOTTA MAKE MY INTENTIONS CLEAR.

TELL HIM NO.
AND TELL HIM TO STOP BOTHERING ME. AND TELL *HIM* WE'RE IN A TIME OF CRISIS AND HE SHOULD DO WHAT'S BEST FOR THE COUNTRY.
AND I DON'T KNOW WHO *THIS* IS.
D-MAN.
I DON'T KNOW WHO HE IS.
SAID HE USED TO BE AN AVENGER AND WANTS TO MEET WITH YOU.
DON'T BOTHER ME WITH STUFF LIKE THIS.
YOUR JOB IS TO KEEP STUFF LIKE *THIS* AWAY FROM ME.
WHATCHA GOT THERE, CAGE?
CHECK THIS @#$% OUT. THIS--THIS IS SOMETHING I LEFT HERE BACK WHEN I LIVED HERE.
I TOOK THIS OFF OF THE WRECKER. THIS IS HIS CROWBAR.
HE BEAT THE @#$% OUT OF THOR WITH THIS. YOU SHOULD FEEL WHAT'S GOIN' ON WITH THIS THING.
NO @#$%, IT GOT POWERS OR SOMETHING?
SOMETHING LIKE THAT.
YOU--

CRACK

SMASK

LORD!

WELL...

CRASH

BOOM

SO, YOU'RE A *LIAR.*

AND YOU'RE A ***MURDERER,*** AND THAT'S WHY I COULD NEVER ***JOIN*** WHATEVER @#$% YOU'RE SELLING HERE.

ALL Y'ALL... MURDERERS AND THIEVES.

BUT YOU SAVED MY KID. YOU DID ME RIGHT.

SO THAT'S WHY I AIN'T TAKIN' YOUR HEAD OFF.

SO WHEN YOUR KID GROWS UP AND DISCOVERS YOU'RE A MAN OF DISHONOR--

HYYYRAAGH!

KSSHH
CROOOOOM
SORRY.
GUESS WHO JUST MADE THE LIST.

AVENGERS HIDEOUT, THE BRONX
HOW ABOUT THAT?
RIGHT?
I CAN'T BELIEVE IT. YOU GOT HER BACK. I CAN'T BELIEVE IT.
I'VE NEVER BEEN THIS CLOSE TO A BABY BEFORE.
GOTTA SEND REED RICHARDS A THANK YOU NOTE OR SOMETHING.
THEY DON'T SMELL THAT BAD AT ALL.
THANK YOU FOR LETTING US STAY HERE.
NO PROBLEM.
I, UH, ACTUALLY DIDN'T KNOW THERE WAS A BABY, BUT OKAY.
SURE.
WHY *DIDN'T* YOU TAKE OSBORN'S HEAD OFF?
BECAUSE I'M NOT GOING DOWN THAT ROAD.
I WOULD HAVE.
I ACTUALLY DON'T THINK YOU WOULD HAVE.
THIS IS FATHER STUFF. IT'S A DIFFERENT THING.
MAYBE.
SON OF A--
THAT-- THAT SON OF A--
LADIES AND GENTLEMEN WATCHING US ALL OVER THE WORLD.

DEADLINENEWS
AVENGERS ASSEMBLE.... LIVE FROM AVENGER'S TOWER... NEW YORK CIT
AS WE START OUR HEALING... AS WE START TO UNDERSTAND HOW WE AS A SPECIES HAVE YET AGAIN TRIUMPHED OVER THOSE WHO WOULD TRY TO TAKE AWAY WHAT IS RIGHTFULLY OURS...
IT IS MY HONOR TO INTRODUCE TO YOU...
YOUR PROTECTORS...
YOUR WARRIORS...
YOUR... AVENGERS!
I AM THE IRON PATRIOT.
I WILL LEAD THESE NEW AVENGERS INTO BATTLE AGAINST ANYONE WHO WOULD THREATEN OUR WAY OF LIFE.
MY NAME IS NORMAN OSBORN AND I APPROVE THESE AVENGERS!
WAIT, WHAT?

WELL, THAT'S JUST OBNOXIOUS.
OKAY, SO WE ALL JUST SAW THAT, RIGHT? I'M NOT NUTS.
AND TODAY'S OUR LUCKY DAMN DAY.
BECAUSE?
BECAUSE HE FINALLY GAVE US A REASON TO GO OVER THERE *AND MOP THE FLOOR WITH HIS BRILLO PAD HEAD!*
WAIT... WHAT?
BECAUSE HE DRESSED UP LIKE YOU?
NO. *YES!*
HISTORICALLY. LISTEN TO ME...
EVERY TIME THE WORLD HAS GONE TO HELL SOMEONE TAKES ADVANTAGE OF IT.
STOCK MARKET CRASHES AND SOME DIRTBAG PARACHUTES OUT WITH A BILLION DOLLARS.
COUNTRY GOES TO WAR, THE MOB HAS A FIELD DAY...
NOW THIS?
THIS?
AND DRESSED IN *OUR* UNIFORMS?
REPRESENTING SOMETHING WE'VE DEDICATED OUR LIVES TO?
TWISTING IT INTO SOMETHING THEY CAN *SELL?*
NO!
NO!
WE DON'T WAIT FOR THEM TO SHOW THEIR TRUE COLORS...
WE *KNOW* THEIR TRUE COLORS.
WE GO THERE AND WE *STOP* THIS BEFORE IT ALL GOES TO HELL AGAIN.
WE GO THERE AND WE TAKE BACK THE AVENGERS FROM THE HANDS OF THE GREEN GOBLIN MANIAC!
WE'RE THE AVENGERS.
WE TAKE IT BACK.